

George Washington School
Eleventh Street at Pennsylvania
Avenue (Southeast corner)
Monaca
Beaver County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1356

HABS
PA,
4-MONO,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MIDATLANTIC REGION , NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA , PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS
PA
4-MONO,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL

HABS NO. PA-1356

Location: Eleventh Street at Pennsylvania Avenue
(Southeast corner), Monaca, Beaver County
Pennsylvania

U.S.G.S. Beaver Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.560940.4504500

Present Owner: Borough of Monaca
928 Pennsylvania Avenue
Monaca, PA 15061

Present Use: Vacant

Last Owner: J. Richard Spouse, et al
171 Kimber Drive
Bridgeville, PA 15017

Last Occupant: Melchiorre Distributors and
Penn Supermarket

Last Use: The structure was used as a warehouse for Penn
Supermarket and Melchiorre Distributors. The
structure is scheduled for demolition by August
15, 1986.

Significance: The significance of the George Washington School
is two-fold. First, the building was erected
during a period of financial crisis, 1930-31,
in which many school budgets were hard hit thereby
representing a recovery from the crisis. Its Art
Deco/Moderne style is reflective of the then
current trend in public buildings of that era.
The building opened in 1932 as the George
Washington Junior High School. Later, the
structure was used as an elementary school
before being sold to private developers in
the 1970's.

Second, the building was a part of the most
significant growth and development period of
Monaca, c. 1895-1935, in which the area east of
Ninth Street along Pennsylvania Avenue became
the downtown business district. The building is
a prominent feature in the heart of the downtown
area and is a good example of the Art/Deco
Moderne style of architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: 1931 The building opened in 1932 as the George Washington Junior High School.
2. Architect: Bradley and Stetson, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

Legal Description: ALL that certain piece, parcel, or lot of land lying and being situate in the Second Ward of the Borough of Monaca, County of Beaver, Pennsylvania, being Lot No. 2 and Part Lot No. 1 in the Plan of Lots laid out by James Harper for William Kelly, as recorded in the Recorder's Office of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, in Plan Book Vol. 1, page 2, being Beaver County Tax Parcel 35-003-0312-000.

Reference to the Chain of Title to the land upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County Court House, Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

1986 Agreement of Sale, February 18, 1986 recorded in Volume 1262, page 334. J. Richard Sprouse, et al. to Borough of Monaca.

1978 Deed, September 7, 1978 recorded in Volume 1111, page 216. Monaca School District to J. Richard Sprouse, et al.

1931 Deed (Lot 2), January 31, 1931 recorded in Volume 397, page 387. First Presbyterian Church of Monaca (formerly First Presbyterian Church of Phillipsburg) to Monaca School District.

1931 Deed (Part Lot 1), April 9, 1931 recorded in Volume 398, page 410. Agostine Tufano, et ux. to Monaca School District.

1931 Eminent Domain Proceedings at No. 93 June Term, 1931, in the Court of Common Pleas of Beaver County, Pennsylvania.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: unknown

5. Original plans and construction: The set of original plans are not available according to the Monaca School District. The building has not been altered since its construction. It is a rectangular two-story, yellow brick school building located on Monaca's main commercial street, Pennsylvania Avenue. The building faces Eleventh Street with its short side toward Pennsylvania Avenue.

The basement area consists of a boiler room, a coal storage room, two general storage areas, and an unexcavated area.

The first floor consists of one long corridor running north and south with an office, six classrooms, a restroom, and a wood shop. (Attachment F. Photocopies 7, 8, 9, 10 depict the corridor, stairwell, and typical classroom). There are two stairwells to the second floor located behind the front entrances.

The second floor also features one corridor with eight classrooms, two kitchens, and a cafeteria. The restrooms and five small storage areas make up the balance of the second floor area.

The school's cost was quoted at \$125,000 in the Beaver County Times, August 16, 1965.

6. Alterations and additions: None

B. Historical Context

The George Washington School building was erected to accommodate the rapid increase in enrollment in the Monaca School District. From 1896, the year the School District was organized, to 1926, a total of 161 students had graduated. The number increased to 1,145 by the year 1940, three-fourths of which graduated in the last ten years.

Foreseeing the need for a new building program, the School Board of Monaca accumulated \$45,000 for this purpose. The residents of then Moon Township petitioned for annexation in December 1930. The two school districts of the Borough and Township merged in July 1931. The firm of Bradley and Stetson, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, was hired to submit plans and specifications to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for a state-approved junior high school building. The Presbyterian Church property and adjacent property were acquired on Pennsylvania Avenue for the site of the school

building. The Township was annexed becoming Monaca's fourth and fifth wards in 1932.

A total of 800 students from both the junior and senior high grades were housed in the Senior High School building in the school year 1931-1932. The building was designed for a capacity of 500 students. During this school year, the junior high school site was cleared, graded, and the George Washington School was erected and equipped at a cost of \$125,000. The school opened in September, 1932, greatly alleviating the overcrowded Senior High School building.

The school's opening had come in the midst of extreme economic hardship for school districts. Cut backs were made in supplies, teachers' salaries, and books. The two largest classrooms of the building, the Domestic Science (home economics) and Manual Training (wood shop and mechanical drawing) rooms were not equipped and their openings were deferred. These rooms were utilized extensively by the American Red Cross organization during this period.

The building is a prominent element of the downtown business district. The present business core developed c. 1895-1935 expanding eastward on Pennsylvania Avenue from the original Phillipsburg settlement. The settlement became the Borough of Monaca in 1892. A detailed history of Monaca's development can be researched in I Remember...Monaca! Copyright 1976 by the Great Arrow Historical Association of Center Township and Monaca and Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Centennial Atlas of Beaver County, 1876.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The building is a good example of the Art Deco/Moderne style common to public structures built at the turn of the century.
2. Condition of Fabric: The general condition of the building is poor. The building has been well constructed, however, due to vandalism, extensive roof leaks and lack of heat, the interior of the building has deteriorated severely. The exterior masonry remains fairly intact.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is two-story, rectangular, and measures 167' x 60'.
2. Foundation: The foundation is poured concrete and cement block. The block measures 12 inches in thickness.
3. Walls: The walls are constructed of yellow brick uniformly laid with deco brick detailing of spandrel decorations and trimmed in concrete block. The front entrances feature vertical projections done in brick which extend above the roof line. Minor decorative bricking is also done between the first and second floor windows on the south side facing Pennsylvania Avenue and above one rear and one side door.
4. Structural system, framing: The structural system consists of structural steel columns with concrete floors. Original building plans are not available to present more detail.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: One chimney exists at the northwest corner of the building. The chimney is constructed of brick and was used for the incinerator located in the basement.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The front entrance of the building (Eleventh Street) has two doorways identical to each other. The doorways are flanked by the brick vertical projections with a 3" thick concrete trim outlining the entranceways. Steel double doors with panic-release bars are set in from the entranceway. The indented portion of the entranceway is brick, uniformly laid to match the outside of the building. Two doors are located on the west side of the building. The doors are raised by three steps of concrete. Presently, the doors are boarded with handles removed. Previously, these doors also were steel double doors with panic-release bars slightly set in from the exterior brick. One entranceway exists on the north elevation of the building (facing Maple Alley). This entranceway also is raised by three concrete steps and is a steel double door with panic-release bars. The door was used by the

previous tenant, a distributor. The entranceway to the basement is also located on the north elevation of the building. The door is a steel single door with a keyed entry lock. The entranceway consists of twenty (20) descending concrete steps and an iron pipe railing approximately four feet in height outlining the entranceway.

- b. Windows: All the windows are multipane steel encased tilt windows. Various sizes of windows are used in the building. The largest consists of sixty lights; fifteen columns of four lights. The top and bottom rows are smaller than the middle two rows. There are eight of the large windows uniformly spaced (four on the first floor and four on the second floor) on the east side of the building (Eleventh Street). Above the entrances, located in the vertical projections are two sets of single lights. The first set directly above the entranceway has two columns of four lights and the second set located above an ornamental piece of concrete has two columns of three lights.

The southern elevation (Pennsylvania Avenue) has ten symmetric windows of twelve lights. The lights are arranged in three columns of four. Each window has two lights surrounded by ten smaller lights. The windows are uniformly spaced, five on the first floor and five on the second floor.

The western elevation has a mixture of sizes of windows. The second floor mostly mirrors the first floor in both size and location of windows. Beginning at the southwest corner of the building and proceeding to the northwest corner of the building, the windows are as follows: on either side of the entrance are two twelve-light windows adjoined by metal casing; directly above each of the windows and entrance are the same windows for a total of five of this size window. The next set of windows are smaller but maintain eight lights. One of these on the first floor and one directly above on the second floor. Following are two of the large sixty-light windows on the first floor and two directly above on the second floor. The next grouping of windows are unevenly spaced and the first and second floors do not directly correlate. The first floor features a window of six lights above the door, a window of

four vertical lights next to the door, and a window of twelve lights near the northwest corner of the building. The second floor consists of one twelve light window, one vertical four-light window, and two eight-light windows, respectively.

The northern elevation (Maple Alley) features four large windows of 36 lights each. The windows are located two on the first floor and two directly above on the second floor. There are also five windows of twelve lights each; one on either side of the door on the first floor and three directly above on the second floor.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: flat built-up, composition.
- b. Cornice, eaves: concrete trim cornice, no eaves.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: none.

C. Description:

- 1. Floor plans: see Attachment A.
- 2. Stairways: There is one stairway from the first floor to the basement; two stairways from the first floor to the second floor; and two small stairways on the second floor to storage areas. The stairways between floors are constructed of steel and concrete with steel handrails. The stairways on the second floor are constructed of hardwood with no handrails.
- 3. Flooring: Hallways consist of terrazzo flooring. Classrooms and other rooms have hardwood flooring natural in color.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: The classroom walls are plaster and painted various muted colors. The ceilings consist of acoustical tile with suspended fluorescent lighting fixtures. The hallway walls are covered with glazed tile approximately halfway and plaster on the remainder.
- 5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The door and doorway typical to each room is a wooden, 1-3/4" door with nine lights

in a wooden door jamb. Doors and doorways are painted dark brown.

- b. Windows: All windows are steel encased with a six inch concrete sill.

6. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: A gas-fired hot water boiler system is located in the basement. An interior incinerator is also located in the basement.
- b. Lighting: All lighting fixtures are fluorescent and suspended from ceilings. Wiring is 200 AMP, mixed Romex and BX wiring.
- c. Plumbing: Copper. Water and sewage provided via the Borough of Monaca.

D. Site

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building is situated on an irregularly shaped level corner lot, nearly rectangular, fronting east toward Eleventh Street. It's short sides face south toward Pennsylvania Avenue and north toward Maple Alley. On the western side of the building is a small parking lot.

The immediate vicinity consists predominantly of one to four story commercial and residential structures along Pennsylvania Avenue and older mixed single family and multiple-family structures along Eleventh Street and Maple Alley. The Post Office lies adjacent to the western side of the property.

- 2. Historic landscape design: The layout of the school and surroundings has remained constant since its construction in 1931. Prior to this time, only the area west of the then Phillip Street (presently Ninth Street) was developed until 1892. The town, originally known as Phillipsburg became Monaca and development began eastward of Ninth Street. The then Fourth Street extended through Monaca becoming the present Pennsylvania Avenue. The commercial structures are similar to the George Washington School building in height, materials, and general period of construction.

3. Outbuildings: None.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Original drawings are not available as per the Monaca School District. The floor plans were drawn from the diagrams in the Long Range Plan Revised January 1973 for the Monaca School District, pp. 4.22-4.26.
- B. Historic Views: The only available photograph has been photocopied and is located on page 30. The photograph was taken by a native Monacan, Mr. J. Dellie Alexander in 1965 during Monaca's dedication of its new high school building.
- C. Interviews: Interviews were conducted with Mr. Michael Siget, Assistant Superintendent of the Monaca School District May 6, 1986 at 3:00 P.M. and May 14, 1986 at 2:30 P.M. Mr. Siget supplied much of the history of the school and attempted to locate the original drawings.
- D. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Office of Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County,
Pennsylvania, Deed Book Volume 1262 p. 334.

Office of Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County,
Pennsylvania, Deed Book Volume 1111, p. 216.

Office of Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County,
Pennsylvania, Deed Book Volume 397, p. 387.

Office of Recorder of Deeds, Beaver County,
Pennsylvania, Deed Book Volume 398, p.410.
 - 2. Secondary and Published Sources:

Caldwell, J. A. Caldwell's Illustrated Historical Centennial Atlas of Beaver County, 1876 pp 38, 39, 61.

Greater Arrow Historical Association, I Remember... Monaca!, Copyright 1976.

"Monaca Education Program Began in 1840", Beaver County Times, August 16, 1965, p.C-1.

- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Monaca School District has a bronze plaque in storage providing additional information concerning the architect, builder, and school board members. The plaque could not be located at the time of this report.
- F. Supplemental Material:
 - 1. Floor Plans - Attachment A.
 - 2. Project Sketch - Attachment B.
 - 3. Site Development Plan - Attachment C.
 - 4. Highlights of Monaca's History - Attachment D.
 - 5. Early Map of Phillipsburg from I Remember...Monaca! Attachment E.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

The project consists of acquisition and demolition of the George Washington School building at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Eleventh Street and construction of a public plaza (the George Washington Town Plaza) and additional parking spaces on the site. The plaza is designed as a semi-circular fountain/stage area facing Pennsylvania Avenue surrounded by open space with a raised, landscaped area behind it, providing greenery and screening the plaza from the parking area at the rear of the site (See Attachment 3).

The project is funded via the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Recreational Improvement and Rehabilitation Act (RIRA) from the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs, and the Borough of Monaca Parking Authority and other local sources.

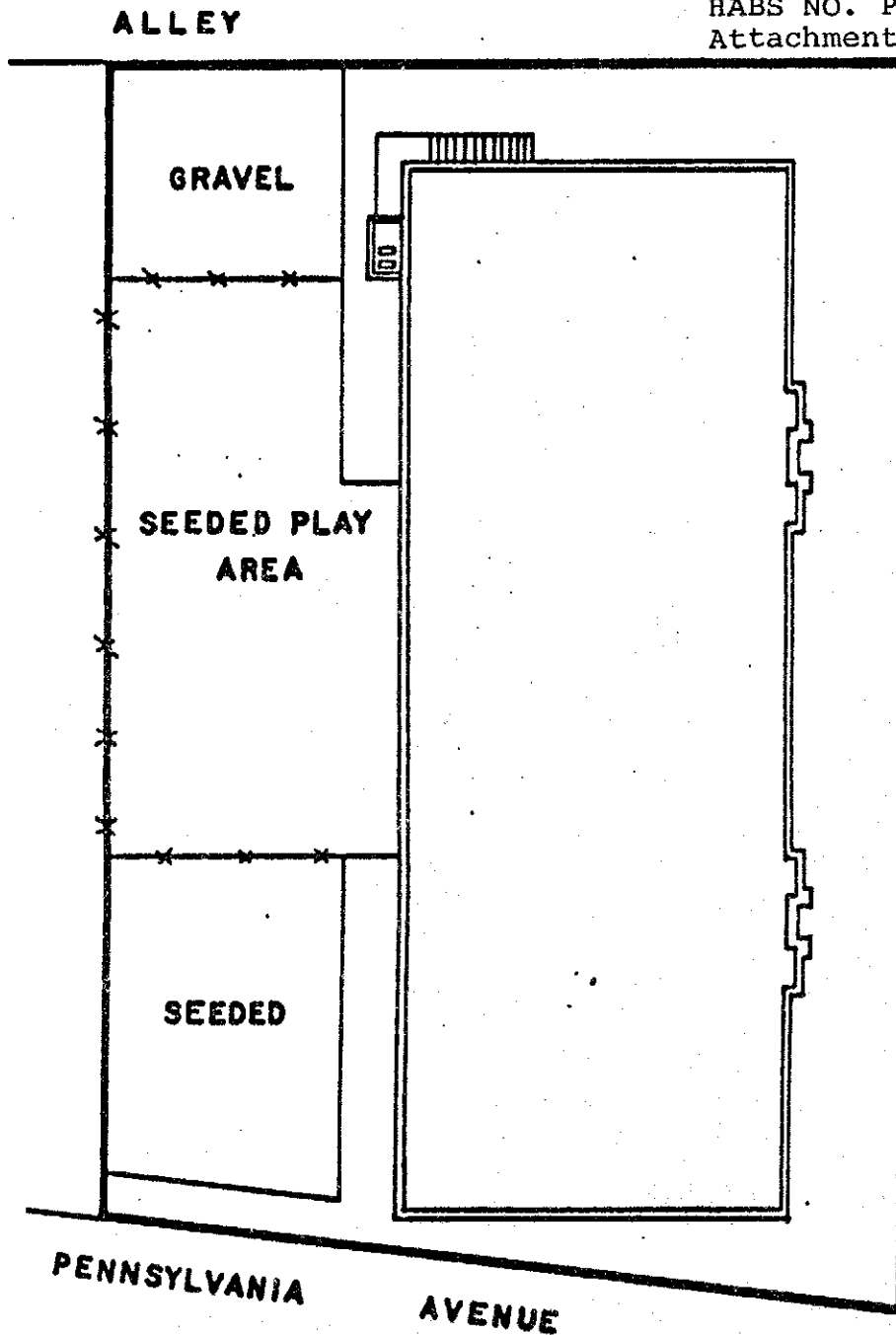
Initial application for CDBG funds was submitted to the County of Beaver April 27, 1984. A second application for CDBG funds was submitted to the County of Beaver April 8, 1985. The application for the RIRA funds was submitted May 30, 1985. Acquisition of the sight by the Borough of Monaca was completed February 18, 1986.

Prepared by: James Palmer

Title: Executive Director

Affiliation: Redevelopment Authority
of the County of Beaver

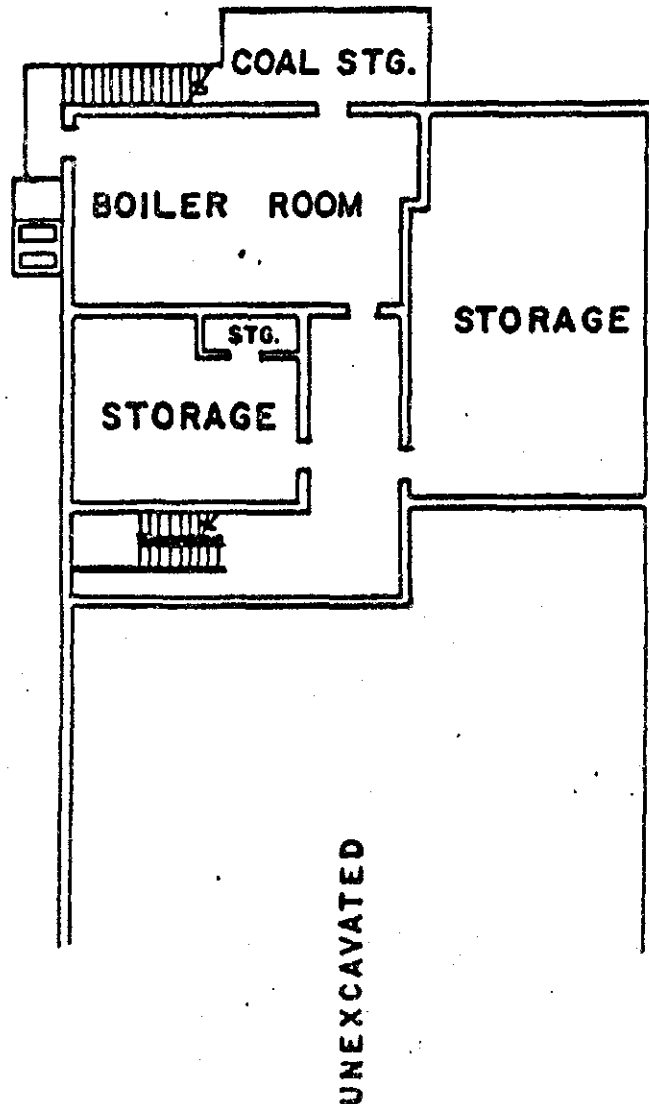
Date: July 11, 1986



PLOT PLAN

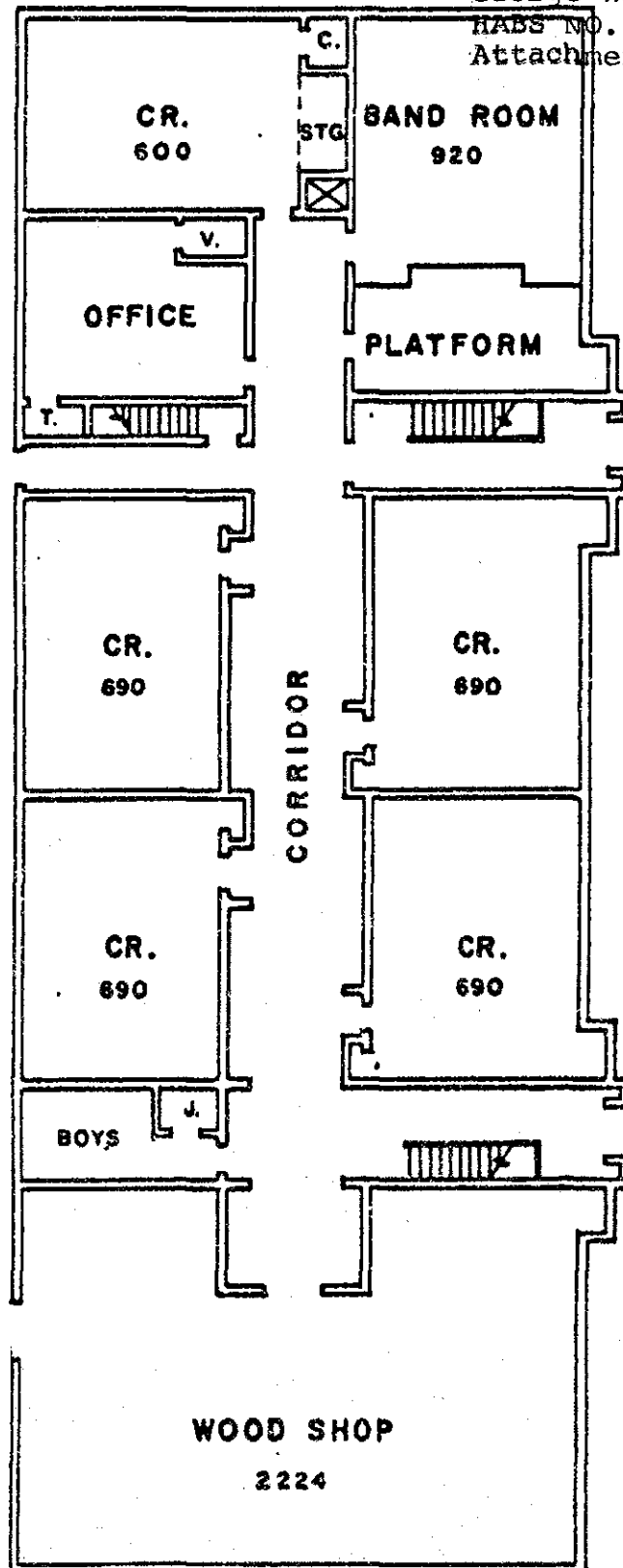
SCALE 1" = 30'

George Washington School
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Attachment A (ii)



BASEMENT

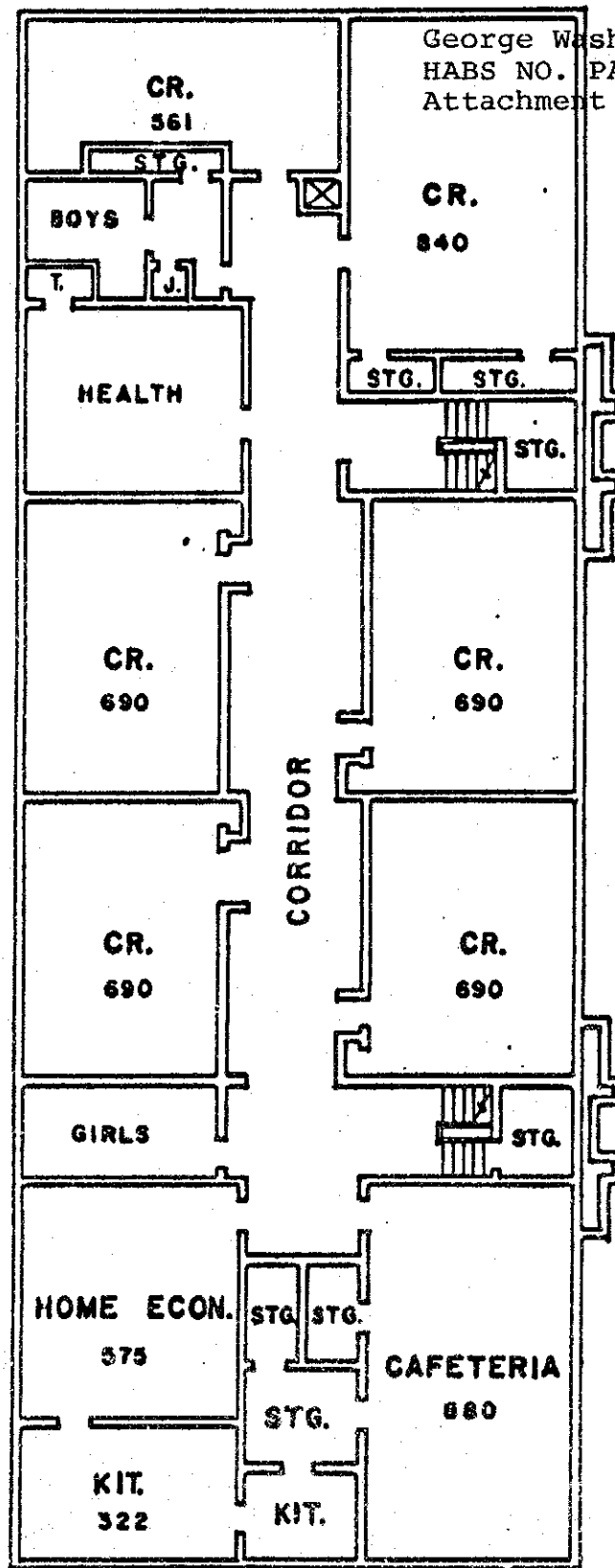
SCALE 1"=20'



FIRST FLOOR

SCALE

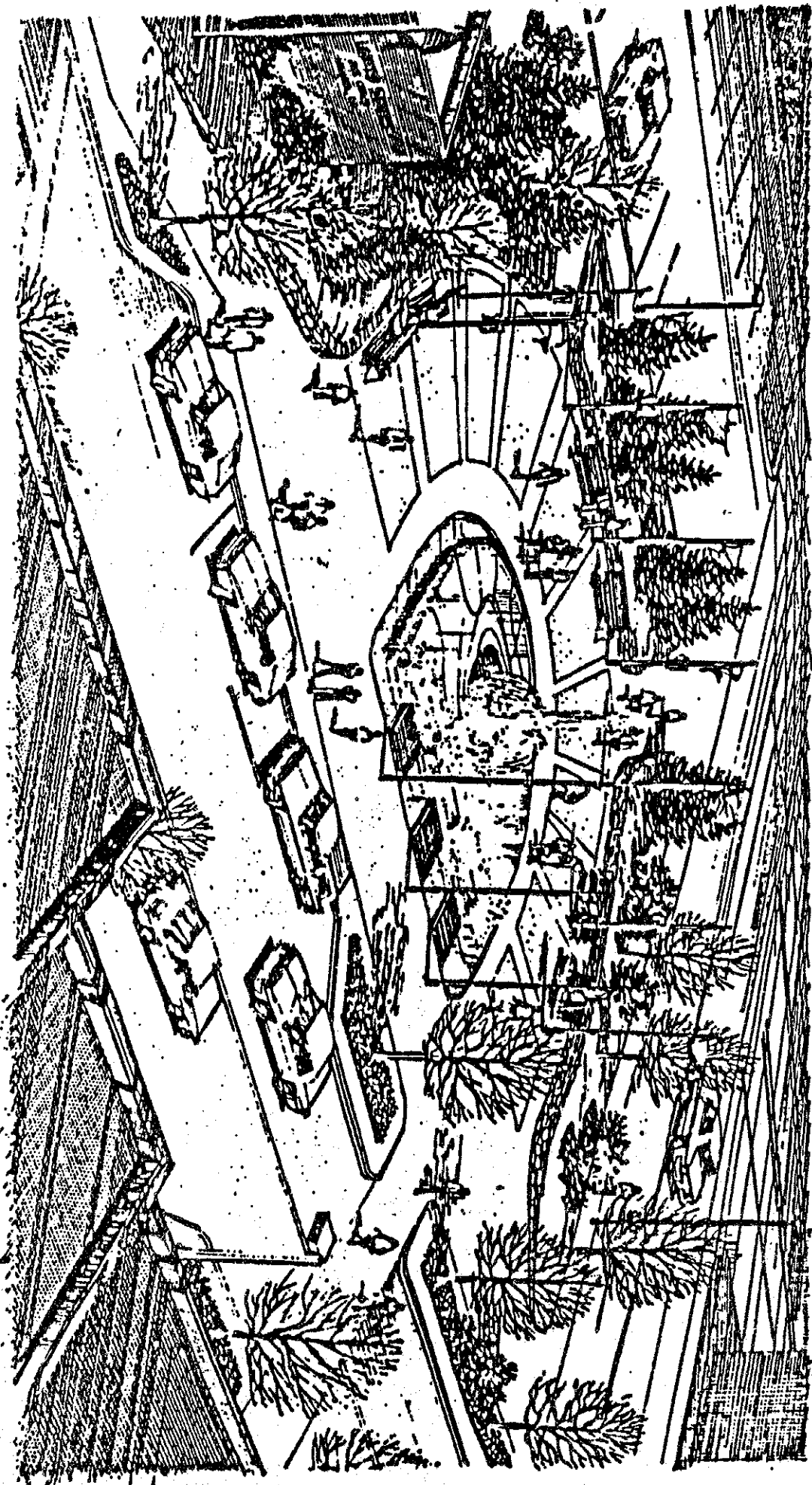
1" = 20'



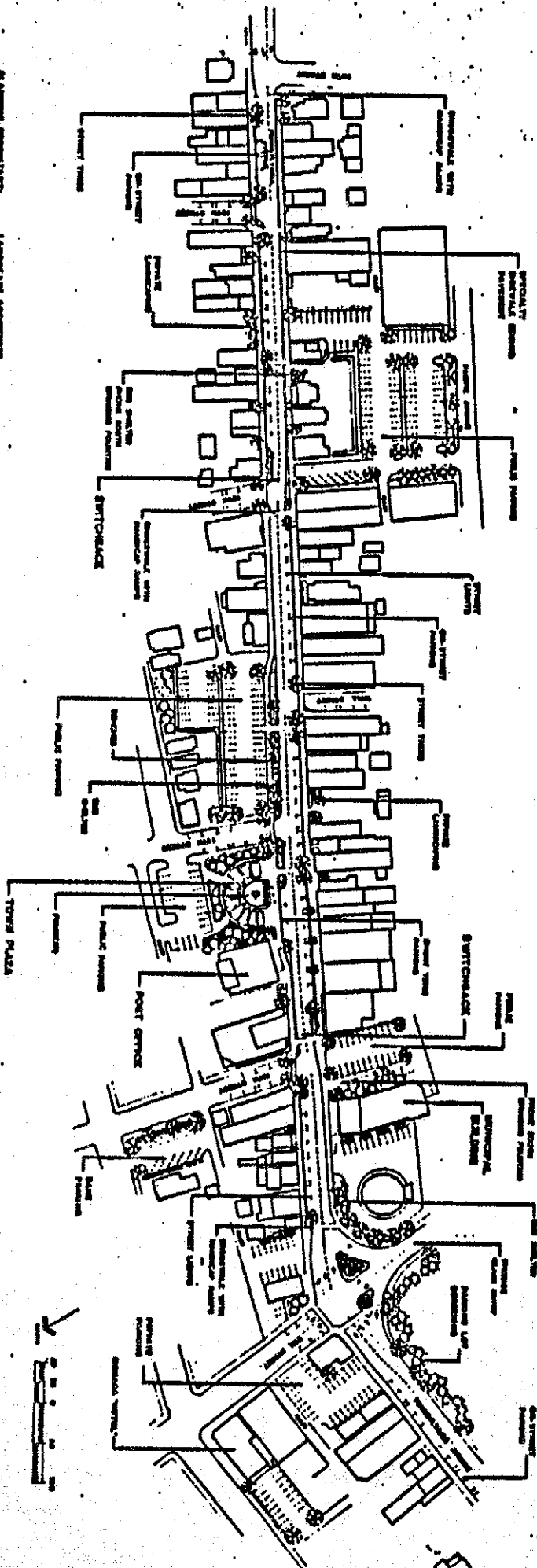
SECOND FLOOR

SCALE

1" = 20'



George Washington School
HABS NO. PA-1356 (page 17)
Attachment C



**PLASTIC CONSTRUCTION
MUNDO & ASSOC.
PARADE & BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003
GR 3-7166**

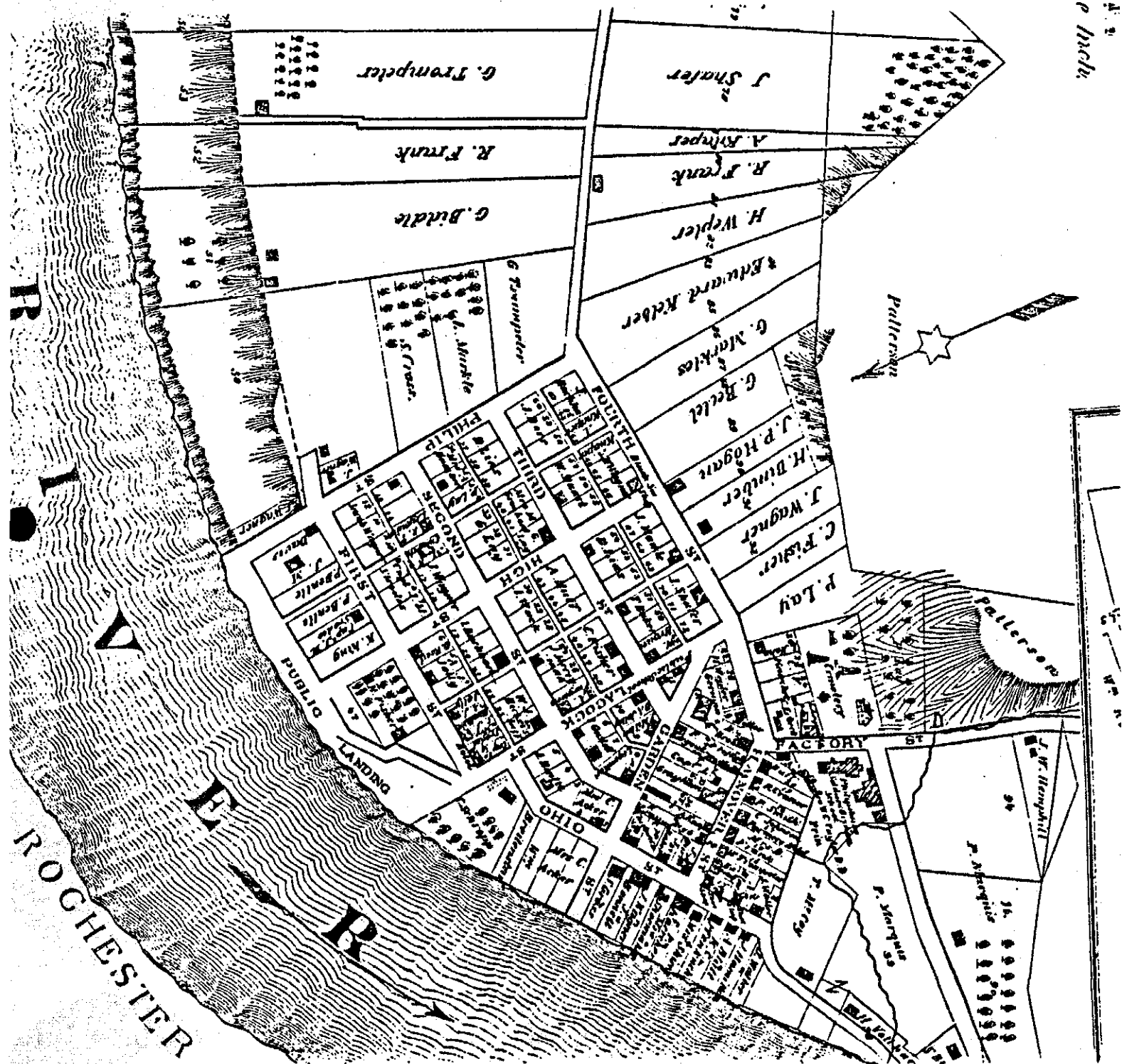
LAMARCAINE ASSOCIATES
VICTOR ♦
 6. STEVENSON CIRCLE
 8700 PINE BLVD
 BIRMINGHAM, AL. 35210
 (205) 961-0000

WHERLEY
 IRVING E. WHERLEY
 7 SPANGLER ROAD
 BRYNMAWR, PA. 19005
 610-354-1624

**DOWNTOWN MONACA
COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION
SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

HIGHLIGHTS OF MONACA'S HISTORY

- Early
1600s The Monongahela People, inhabitants of the Ohio Valley for many years, disappear without a trace.
- 1609 London Company patent revised to include land "from sea to sea, west and north-west", basis to Virginia's later claim to the south side of Beaver County.
- 1681 Charles II granted charter to William Penn, to include land extending westward five degrees of longitude from the Delaware River, basis of Pennsylvania's claim to future Beaver County.
- 1694 Arnout Vlele, a Dutch trader, accompanied by a band of Shawnee, explored the Ohio Valley; First colonial to see the future Monaca.
- 1768 Purchase of 1768 made by Pennsylvania Proprietary government from the Indians at Fort Stanwix (N.Y.); Included south side of Beaver County.
- 1770 George Washington travelled through on the Ohio River.
- 1773 Westmoreland County erected; County seat at Hannastown; Included south side of future Beaver County.
- 1778 Virginia County of Yohogania, District of West Augusta, erected (included south side of Beaver County). County seat at Fort Dunmore (Pittsburgh).
- 1778 Military road to Fort McIntosh built on the south side (later called Brodhead's Road).
- 1779 Pennsylvania - Virginia boundary resolved in Baltimore and confirmed by Pennsylvania.
- 1787 330 acre tract of land granted to Ephraim Blaine.
- 1799 Anthony Baker, first permanent settler, arrived.
- 1800 Beaver County erected, March 12.
- 1821 George Rapp of the Harmony Society purchased land from Francis Helveti at sheriff's sale.
- 1822 Phillips and Graham purchase land from Economites, establish boatyard and village of Phillipsburgh.
- 1834 Dissenters from Harmony Society purchase land from Phillips & Graham, establish "New Philadelphia".
- 1840 Phillipsburgh Borough incorporated from Moon Township.
- 1848 Watercure Sanatorium established by Dr. Edward Acker.
- 1856 First post office, "Water Cure", established.
- 1866 Phillipsburgh Soldier's Orphans Home established.
- 1866 Thiel Hall, first academy, established by Rev. William Passavant.
- 1870 Thiel Hall chartered as college, first in county.
- 1876 Soldier's Orphans Home burned.
- 1877 Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad constructed through town.
- 1880 First town council organized.
- 1892 Phillipsburgh changes name to Monaca.
- 1896 First bridge to Rochester opened.
- 1914 Center Township formed from Moon Township.
- 1930 New bridge to Rochester opened.
- 1932 Moon Township annexed as Monaca's Fourth and Fifth Wards.
- 1937 Beaver Valley Traction Co. street cars ended service.
- 1940 Monaca celebrates her Centennial.
- 1959 Toll bridge opened to East Rochester.
- 1966 New High School opened.
- 1973 Great Arrow Historical Association founded.
- 1976 Monaca celebrates America's Bicentennial.





PHOTOCOPY OF 1965 PHOTOGRAPH BY J. DELLIE ALEXANDER (ORIGINAL NEGATIVE
UNABLE TO BE LOCATED) VIEW NORTH, SOUTH SIDE AND EAST FRONT